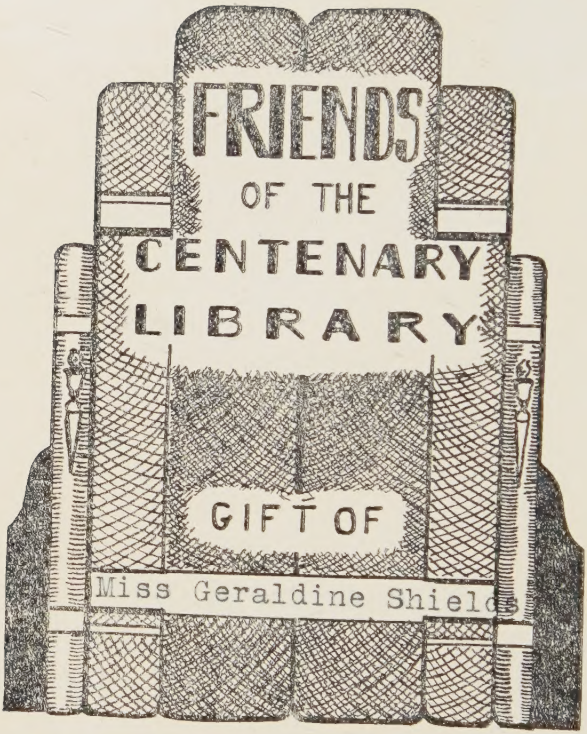
THY SERVANT A DOG

told by
BOOTS

Edited by
RUDYARD KIPLING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MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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edited by

RUDYARD KIPLING

illustrated by

G. L. STAMPA

DISCARDED BY TML

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"THY SERVANT A DOG"

"THY SERVANT A DOG"

PLEASE may I come in? I am Boots. I am son of Kildonan Brogue—Champion Reserve—V.H.C.—very fine dog; and no-dash-parlour-tricks, Master says, except I can sit-up, and put paws over nose. It is called "Making Beseech." Look! I do it out of own head. *Not* for telling. . . . This is Flat-in-Town. I live here with Own God. I tell:

I

There is walk-in-Park-on-lead. There is off-lead-when-we-come-to-the-grass. There is 'nother dog, like me, off-lead. I say: "Name?" He says: "Slippers." He says: "Name?" I say: "Boots." He says: "I am fine dog. I have Own God called Miss." I say: "I am very fine dog. I have Own God called Master." There is walk-round-on-toes. There is Scrap. There is Proper Whacking. Master says: "Sorry! Awfully sorry! All my fault." Slippers's Miss says: "Sorry! My fault too." Master says: "So glad it is both our faults. Nice little dog, Slippers." Slippers's Miss says: "Do you really think so?" Then I made "Beseech." Slippers's Miss says: "Darling little

dog, Boots." There is on-lead again, and walking with Slippers behind both Own Gods, long times. . . . Slippers is not-half-bad dog. Very like me. 'Make-fine-pair, Master says. . . .

There is 'nother dog, like me, off-lead.

There is more walkings in Park. There is Slippers and his Miss in that place, too. Own Gods walk together—like on-lead. We walk behind. We are tired. We yawn. Own Gods do not look. Own Gods do not hear. . . . They have put white bows on our collars. We do not like. We have pulled off. They are bad to eat. . . .

II

Now we live at Place-in-Country, next to Park, and plenty good smells. We are all here. Please look! I count paws. There is me, and Own God—Master. There is Slippers, and Slippers's Own God—Missus. That is all my paws. There is Adar. There is Cookey. There is James-with-Kennel-that-Moves. There is Harry-with-Spade. That is all Slippers's paws. I cannot count more; but there is Maids, and Odd-man, and

Postey, and Telegrams, and Pleasm-butcher and People. And there is Kitchen Cat which runs up Wall. *Bad! Bad! Bad!*

At morning-time Adar unties and brushes. There is going quick upstairs past Cookey and asking Gods to come to brekker. There is lie-down-under-the-table-at-each end, and heads-on-feets of Gods. Sometimes there is things-gived-under-table. But 'must *never* beg'.

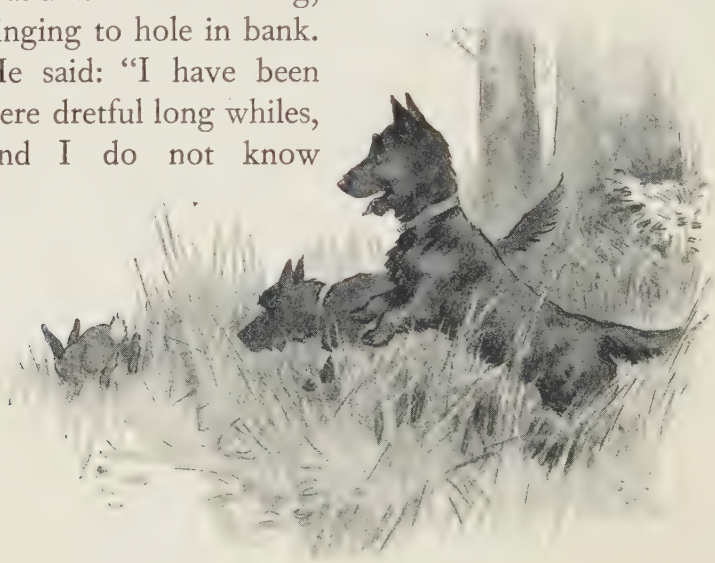
After brekker, there is hunting Kitchen Cat all over garden to Wall. She climbs. We sit under and sing. There is waiting for Gods going walks. If it is nothing-on-their-tops, it is only round the garden, and 'get-off-the-flower-beds-you-two!' If it is wet, it is hearth-rugs by fire, or 'who-said-you-could-sit-on-chairs-Little-Men?' It is always being-with Own Gods—Own Master and Own Missus. We are most fine dogs. . . . There is Tall far-off dog, which comes through laurels, and looks. We have found him by own dust-bin. We said: "Come back, and play!" But he wented off. His legs are all bendy. And wavy ears. But bigger than Me!

III

August 1923

Please sit up! I will tell you by Times and Long Times—each time at a time. I tell good things and dretful things.

Beginning of Times. There was walk with Own Gods, and 'basket-of-things-to-eat-when-we-sit-down — piggies.' It were long walks. We ate lots. After, there was rabbits which would not stay. We hunted. We heard sorrowful singing in woods. We went look-see. There was that far-off Tall dog, singing to hole in bank. He said: "I have been here dretful long whiles, and I do not know



After, there was rabbits which would not stay.

where here is." We said: "Follow tails!" He followed back to Own Gods. Missus said: "Oh, you poor big baby!" Master said: "What on earth is Kent's puppy doing here?" Tall dog went on tum plenty, and said small. There was 'give-him-what's-left.' He kissed hands. We all wented home across fields. He said

We heard sorrowful singing in woods.

he were playing with washing-on-line, which waved like tails. He said little old dog with black teeth came, and said he would make him grow-into-a-hound, if he went with. So he wented with, and found beautiful Smell. Old dog said him to put his dash-nose-upon-the-ground and puzzle. He puzzled long ways with old dog. There was field full of 'ware-sheep and beautiful Smell stopped. Old dog was angry and said him to cast-forward. But Peoples came saying loud. He ran into woods. Old dog said if he waited long enough there he would grow-into-a-hound, and it would do-him-good to have to find his way home, because he would have to do it most of his life if he was so-dash-stoopid-as-all-that. Old dog went away and Tall dog waited for more beautiful Smell, and it was night-times, and he did not know where home was, and he singed what we heard. He were very sorry. He is quite new dog. He says he is called 'Dam-Puppy'. After long whiles there was smells which he knew. So he went through hedge and ran to his home. He said he was in for Proper Whacking.

One Time after That. Kitchen Cat sits on Wall. We sing. She says: "Own Gods are going away." Slippers says: "They come back at Biscuit-time." Kitchen Cat says: "This time they will go and *never* come back." Slippers says: "That is not real rat." Kitchen Cat says: "Go to top of House, and see what Adar is doing with kennels-that-shut."

We go to top of House. There is Adar and kennels-that-shut. She fills with things off Gods' feet and tops and middles. We go downstairs. We do not understand. . . .

Kitchen Cat sits on Wall and says: "Now you have seen that Own Gods are going. Wait till kennels-that-shut are put behind kennel-that-moves, and Own Gods get in. Then you will know." Slippers says: "How do you know where that rat will run?" Kitchen Cat says: "Because I am Cat. You are Dog. When you have done things, you ask Own Gods if it is Whack or Pat. You crawl on tum. You say: 'Please, I will be good.' What will you do when Own Gods go and never come back?" Slippers said: "I will bite you when I catch you." Kitchen Cat said: "Grow legs!"

She ran down Wall and went to Kitchen. We came after. There was Cookey and broom. Kitchen Cat sat in window and said: "Look at this Cookey. Sometimes this is thick Cookey; sometimes this is thin Cookey. But it is always my Cookey. I am never Cookey's Cat. But you must always have Own Gods with. Else you go bad. What will you do when Own Gods go away?" We were not comfy. We went inside House. We asked Own Gods not to go away and never come back. They did not understand. . . .

IV

Time After. Own Gods *have* gone away in kennel-that-moves, with kennels-that-shut behind! Kennel came back at Biscuit-time, but no Gods. We went over House looking. Kitchen Cat said: "Now you see!" We went to look everywhere. There was nothing. . . . There is Peoples called Carpenters come. They are making a little House inside Big House. There is Postey talking to Adar. There is Pleasm-butcher talking to Cookey. There is everybody talking. Everybody says: "Poor little chaps." *And* goes away.

Some more Time. This night-time, Shiny Plate shined into our kennels, and made sing. We sang: "When will Own Gods come back?" Adar looked out from high-up-above, and said: "Stop that, or I'll come down to you." We were quiet, but Shiny Plate shined more. We singed: "We will be good when the Gods come back." Adar came down. There was

Kitchen cat said: "Now you see!"

Whackings. We are poor little small dogs. We live in Outside Places. Nobody cares for.

V

Other more times. I have met that Tall far-off dog with large feet. He is not called 'Dam-Puppy'. He is called Ravager-son-of-Regan. He has no Own God because he will pass-the-bottle-round-and-grow-into-a-Hound. He lives across Park, at Walk, with dretful Peoples called Mister-Kent. I have went to Walk. There were fine smells and pig-pups, and a bucket full of old things. Ravager said: "Eat hearty!" He is nice dog. I ate lots. Ravager put his head through handle of bucket. It would not go away from him. He went back-first, singing. He sang: "I am afraid." Peoples came running. I went away. I wented into dark place called Dairy. There was butters and creams. People came. I went out of a little window. I sicked-up two times before I could run quick. I went to own kennel and lay down. That Peoples called Mister-Kent came afterwards. He said to Adar: "That little black beast is dam-thief." Adar said "Nonsense! He is asleep." Slippers came and said: "Come and play Rats." I said: "Go to Walk and play with Ravager." Slippers wented. People thought Slippers was me. Slippers came home quick. I am very fine dog—but Master has not come back!

VI

After that Time. I am Bad Dog. I am Very Bad Dog. I am 'G'way-you-dirty-little-devil!' I found a Badness on the road. I liked it! I rolled in it! It were nice! I came home. There was Cookey and Adar. There was 'Don't-you-come-anigh-me.' There was James-with-kennel-that-moves. There was: 'Come 'ere, you young pole-cat!' He picked up, and washed with soap, and sticky water out of kennel-that-moves rubbed into all my hairs. There was tie-up. I smelled very bad to myself. Kitchen Cat came. I said: "G'way! I am Filfy Bad Dog! I am Proper Stink-pot!" Kitchen Cat said: "That is not your own rat. You are bad because Own Gods do not come back. You are like People who can not be good without Own Gods to pat."

VII

Other Fresh Times. Now I am great friend of Ravager. Slippers and me have wented to hunt Hen at Walk. She was angry Hen-lady with pups. She bit Slippers, two times, with her nose, under his eye. We all went one way. There was Pig-lady with pups that way. We went other way. There was Mister-Kent-Peoples with whack-stick that way. We wented more ways, quick. We found a fish-head on a heap of nice old things. There was Ravager. We all went for play. There was

There was Pig-lady with pups that way. We went other way.

cow-pups in field. They ran after. We went under gate and said. They ran away. We ran after till they stopped. They turned round. We went away again. They ran after. We played a long while. It were fun. Mister-Kent-People and more Peoples came calling dretful names. We said to Ravager: "We will go home." Ravager said: "Me too." He ran across field. We went home by small ditches. We played Rat-sticks on the lawn.

Cowman Peoples came and said to Adar: "Those two little devils have been chasing pounds off the calves!" Adar said: "Be ashamed of yourself! Look at 'em! Good as gold!" We waited till Peoples were gone. We asked for sugar. Adar gave. Ravager came through laurels—all little. He said: "I have had Proper Whacking. What did you get?" We said: "Sugar." He said: "You are very fine dogs. I am hungry." I said: "I will give you my store-bone in the border. Eat hearty." He digged. We helped. Harry-with-Spade came. Ravager went through laurels like Kitchen Cat. We got Proper Whacking and tie-up for digging in borders. When we are bad, there is Sugar. When we are good, there is Whack-whack. That is same rat going two wrong ways. . . .

VIII

Harry-with-Spade has brought a Rat. . . . Look, please! Please look! I am Rrreal Dog! I have killed a

I am Rrreal Dog. I have killed a Rat.

Rat. I have slew a Rat! He bit me on the nose. I bit him again. I bit him until he died. I shook him dead! Harry said: "Go-ood boy! 'Born ratter!" I am very-fine-dog indeed! Kitchen Cat sat on the Wall and said: "That is not your own Rat. You killed it to please a God." When my legs are grown, I will kill Kitchen Cat like Rats. *Bad! Bad! Bad!*

IX

Time soon After. I wented to Walk to tell my friend Ravager about my Rat, and find more things to kill. Ravager said: "There is 'ware-sheep for me, and there is 'ware-chicken for me, but there is no 'ware-Bull for me. Come into Park and play with Bull-in-yard." We went under Bull's gate in his yard. Ravager said: "He is too fat to run. Say!" I said. Bull said. Ravager said. Slippers said. I got under water-trough and said dretful things. Bull blew with nose. I went out through fence, and came back through another hole. Ravager said from other side of yard. Bull spun. He blew. He was too fat. It were fun. We

heard Mister-Kent saying loud. We went home across Park. Ravager says I am True Sporting Dog, only except because of my little legs.

It were *very* Small Peoples.

X

OCTOBER 1923

Bad Times dead. Sit up! Sit up now! I tell! I tell! There has been washings and Sunday collars. Carpenter Peoples has gone away, and left new Small House inside Big House. There is very small kennel-that-rocks inside Small House. Adar showed. We went to James's house. He were gone away with kennel-that-moves. We went to front-gate. We heard! We saw! Own Gods—very Own Gods—Master—Missus—came back! We said. We danced. We rolled. We ran round. We went to tea, heads-on-feets of Own Gods! There was buttered toasts gived under table, and two sugars each. . . .

We heard New Peoples talking in Big House. One People said: "Angh! Angh!" very small like cat-pups. Other People said: "Bye-loe! Bye-loe!" We asked Own

Gods to show. We went upstairs to Small House. Adar was giving cup-o'-tea to New Peoples, more thick than Adar, which was called 'Nurse'. There was very-small-talk inside kennel-that-rocks. It said: "Aie! Aie!" We looked in. Adar held collars. It were *very* Small Peoples. It opened its own mouth. But there was no teeth. It waved paw. I kissed. Slippers kissed. New Thick, which is that Nurse, said: "Well-Mum-I-never!" Both Own Gods sat down by Smallest Peoples and said and said and kissed paw. Smallest Peoples said very loud. New Thick gave biscuit in a bottle. We tail-thumped on floor, but 'not-for-you-greedies'. We went down to hunt Kitchen Cat. She ran up apple-tree. We said: "Own Gods *have* come back, with one Smallest New Peoples, in smallest-kennel!" Kitchen Cat said: "That is not Peoples. That is Own Gods' Very Own Smallest. *Now* you are only dirty little dogs. If you say too loud to me or Cookey, you will wake that Smallest, and there will be Proper Whackings. If you scratch, New Thick will say: 'Fleas! Fleas!' and there will be more Proper Whackings. If you come in wet, you will give Smallest sneezes. *So* you will be pushed Outside, and you will scratch at doors that shut-in-your-eye. You will belong with Yards and Brooms and Cold Passages and all the Empty Places." Slippers said: "Let us go to Own Kennel and lie down." We wented.

We heard Own Gods walking in garden. They said:

" 'Nice to be home again, but where are the Little Men?" Slippers said: "Lie still, or they will push us into the Empty Places." We lay still. Missus called: "Where is Slippers?" Master called: "Boots, you ruffian! Hi! Boots!" We lay still. Own Gods came into yard and found. They said: "Oh, *there* you are! Did you think we would forget you? Come-for-walks." We came. We said soft. We rolled before feets, asking not to be pushed into Empty Places. I did a Beseech, because I were not comfy. Missus said: "Who'd have thought they'd take it this way, poor Little Men?" Master threw plenty sticks. I picked up and brought back. Slippers went inside with Missus. He came out quick. He said: "Hurry! Smallest is being washed." I went like rabbits. Smallest was all no-things on top or feets or middle. Nurse, which is Thick, washed and rubbed, and put things on-all-over afterwards. I kissed hind-

He said: "Hurry! Smallest is being washed."

feet. Slippers too. Both Gods said: "Look—it tickles him! He laughs. *He* knows they're all right!" Then they said and they said and they kissed and they kissed it, and it was bye-loe—same as "kennel-up"—and then dinner, and heads-on-feets under table, and lots things-passed-down. One were kidney, and two was cheeses. We *are* fine dogs!

XI

March 1924

Very many Long Times after those Times. Both Gods have gone-week-ends in kennel-that-moves. But we are not afraid. They will come back. Slippers went up to talk to that Smallest and Nurse. I went to see my great friend Ravager at Walk, because I see him very often. There was new, old, small, white dog outside Barn. There was only one eye. He was dretful bitted all over. His teeth was black. He walked slow. He said: "I am Pensioned Hunt Terrier! Behave, you lap-dog!" I was afraid of his oldness and his crossness. I went paws-up. I told about me and Slippers and Ravager. He said: "I know that puppy. I taught him to grow-into-a-hound. I am more dash-old than Royal, his grandfather." I said: "Is it good Rat? He is my friend. Will he grow-into-a-Hound?" Hunt Terrier said: "That depends." He scratched his dretful-bitted neck and looked me out of his eye. I did not feel comfy. I wented

into Barn. There was Ravager on Barn floor and two Peoples. One was all white, except his black ends, which was called Moore. One was long, proper man, and nice, which was called m'Lord. Moore-man lifted Ravager's head and opened his mouth. Proper Man looked. Moore said: "Look, m'lord. He's swine-chopped." Proper Man said: " 'Pity! He's by Romeo and Regan." Moore-man said: "Yes, and she's the wisest, worst-tempered bitch ever was." Proper Man gave Ravager biscuit. Ravager stood up stiff on toes —*very* fine dog. Moore said: "Romeo's shoulders. Regan's feet. It's a pity, m'lord." Proper Man said: "*And* Royal's depth. 'Great pity. *I* see. I'll give you the order about him to-morrow."

They wented away. Ravager said: "Now they will make me grow-into-a-Hound. I will be sent into Kennels, and schooled for cubbing-in-September." He went after. Hunt Terrier came and showed black teeth. I said: "What is 'swine-chopped'?" He said: "Being snipey-about-the-nose, stoopid." Then Moore came and put Hunt Terrier up on neck, same as Cookey carries Kitchen Cat. Hunt Terrier said: "Never walk when you can ride at *my* time of life." They wented away. Me too. *But* I were not comfy.

When I got home, Nurse and Adar and Cookey were in scullery, all saying loud about Slippers and Kitchen Cat and Smallest. Slippers was sitting in sink—bleedy.

I let go because I did not see.

Adar turned sink-tap-water on his head. Slippers jumped down and ran. We hid in boot-house. Slippers said: "I wented up to see that Smallest. He was bye-loe. I lay under Nurse's bed. She went down for cup-o'-tea. Kitchen Cat came and jumped into kennel-that-rocks, beside Smallest. I said: 'G'out of this!' She said: 'I will sleep here. It is warm.' I said very loud. Kitchen Cat jumped out on floor. I bit her going to the door. She hit. I shook. We fell downstairs into Nurse. Kitchen Cat hit across face. I let go because I did not see. Kitchen Cat said, and Cookey picked up. I said, and Adar picked up, and put me on sink and poured water on bleedy eye. Then they all said. But I am quite well-dog, and it is *not* washing-day for me." I said: "Slippers, you *are* fine dog! I am afraid of Kitchen Cat." Slippers said: "Me too. But that time I was new dog inside-me. I were 'normous f'rocious big Hound! Now I am Slippers."

I told about Ravager and Moore and Proper Man

and Hunt Terrier and swine-chopped. Slippers said: "I cannot see where that Rat will run. I smell it is bad rat. But I must watch my Smallest. It is your rat to kill."

XII

Next Time after Not-Comfy. Kitchen Cat is gone away and not come back. Kitchen is not nice to go in. I have went to see my friend Ravager at Walk. He were tied up. He sang sorrowful. He told dretful things. He said: "When I were asleep last night, I grew-into-a-Hound —very fine Hound. I went sleep-hunting with 'nother Hound—lemon-and-white Hound. We sleep-hunted 'normous big Fox-Things all through Dark Covers. Then I fell in a pond. There was a heavy thing tied to my neck. I went down and down into pond till it was all dark. I were frightened and I unsleeped. Now I am not comfy." I said: "Why are you tied-up?" He said: "Mister-Kent has tied me up to wait for Moore." I said: "That is not my Rat. I will ask Hunt Terrier."

So I went back into Park. I were uncomfy in all my hairs because of my true friend Ravager. There were hedgehog in ditch. He rounded up. I said loud. Hunt Terrier came out of bushes and pushed him into a wetness. He unrounded. Hunt Terrier killed. I said: "You are most wonderful, wise, strong, fine dog." He said: "What bone do you want now, Snipey?" I said: "Tell

me, what is 'snipey-about-the-nose'?" He said: "It is what they kill Hound puppies for, because they cannot eat fast or bite hard. It is being like *your* nose." I said: "I can eat and bite hard. I am son of Champion Kildonan Brogue—Reserve—V.H.C.—very-fine-dog." Hunt Terrier said: "I know that pack. They hunt fleas. What flea is biting you?" I said: "Ravager is uncomfy, and I am uncomfy of my friend Ravager." He said: "You are not so lap-dog as you look. Show me that puppy on the flags." So I said about Ravager sleep-hunting and falling in pond, which he had told me when he were tied up. Hunt Terrier said: "Did he sleep-hunt with a lemon-and-white-bitch with a scar on her left jowl?" I said: "He said he hunted with 'nother Hound—lemon-and-white—but he did not say Lady-Hound or jowels. How did you know?" Hunt Terrier said: "*I* knew last night. It will be dash-near-squeak for Ravager."

Then we saw Moore on Tall Horse in Park. Hunt Terrier said: "He is going to the Master for orders about Ravager. Run!" I were runnier than Hunt Terrier. He was rude. There was Big House in Park. There was garden and door at side. Moore went in. Hunt Terrier stayed to mind Horse, which was his Tall Friend. I saw Proper Man inside, which had been kind to Ravager at Walk. So I wented in, too. Proper Man said: "What's this, Moore? 'Nother Hunt Terrier?" Moore said: "No, m'lord. It's that little black devil from

The Place, that's always coming over to Kent's and misleading Ravager." Proper Man said: "No getting away from Ravager this morning, it seems." Moore said: "No —nor last night either, m'lord." Proper Man said: "Yes, I heard her." Moore said: "I've come for orders about Ravager, m'lord." Proper Man sat look-not-see—same as Master with pipe. I were not comfy. So I sat up on my end, and put paws over nose, and made a big Beseech. That is all I can. Proper Man looked and said: "What? Are *you* in it too, you little oddity?" Hunt Terrier said outside: "No dash-parlour-tricks in there! Come on out of it!" So I came out and helped mind Tall Horse.

After whiles, Moore came out, and picked up Hunt Terrier, and put him on front-saddle, and hurried. Hunt Terrier said rudenesses about my short legs. When we got to Walk, Moore said loud to Mister-Kent: "It is all right." Mister-Kent said: "'Glad of it. How did it come about?" Moore said: "Regan saved him. She was howling cruel last night; and when his Lordship looked in this morning, she was all over him, playing the kitten and featherin' and pleadin'. *She* knew! He didn't say anything then, but he said to me just now: "Ravager will be sent to Kennels with the young entry, and we'll hope his defect ain't too hereditary."

Mister-Kent untied. Ravager rolled and said and said and played with me. We played I were Fox-at-his-home-among-the-rocks, all round Pig-ladies-houses.

I went to ground under hen-house. Hen-ladies said plenty. Hunt Terrier said if he had me for two seasons, he would make me earn-my-keep. But I would not like. I am afraid I would be put-in-ponds and sunk, because I am snipey-about-the-nose. But now I am comfy in all my hairs. I have ate grass and sicked up. I am happy dog.

XIII

Early April 1924

Most wonderful Times. We are fine dogs. There was Bell-Day, when Master comes black-all-over, and walks slow with shiny box on top and 'don't-you-play-with-my-brolly.' That is *always* Bell-Day Rat. Nurse put Smallest into push-kennel, and went for walk-in-Park. We went with, and ran, and said lots. We went by Walk all along railings of Park. Ravager heard. He said: "I will come. My collar is too big." He slipped collar and came with. That Smallest said loud and nice, and waved paw. Ravager looked into push-kennel and kissed Smallest on its face. Nurse shooed and wiped with hanky. Ravager said: "*Why* am I 'slobbery-beast'? It is not 'ware-Smallest for me."

We all walked across Park beside push-kennel. There was noise behind bushes. Bull-which-we-played-with-in-yard came out, and digged with paws and waved tail. Nurse said: "Oh, what shall I do—I do?

My legs are wobbly." She took Smallest out of push-kennel and ran to railings. Bull walked quick after. We ran in front. Slippers and I said lots. Ravager jumped at his nose and ran. Bull spun. Ravager ran behind push-kennel. Bull hit push-kennel on one side, and kneeled-down-on. Ravager jumped at his nose, and Slippers bit behind. Me too. Bull spun. Ravager ran a little in front. Bull came after to shrubbery. Ravager

Nurse said: "Oh, what shall I do—I do?
My legs are wobbly."

said: "Chop him in cover!" We chopped, running in and out. Then Ravager bited and jumped back-with-barks before nose. It was fun. Bull got bleedy. Slippers and me said dretful things. Bull ran away into Park and stopped. We said from three places, so he could not choose which. It were great fun.

Peoples called out from railings round Walk. There was Nursey paws-up on ground, kicking feet. There was that Smallest and Own Gods holding tight. There was Mister-Kent-Peoples. Bull said, quite small—like cow-pup. Mister-Kent came and put stick at Bull's nose and took away on-lead. All the Peoples on the railing said most loud at us. We were frightened, because of chasing-pounds-off-those-calves. We went home other ways. Ravager came with, because he had slipped his collar and was in for Proper Whack-Whack. I opened dust-bin with my nose—like I can do. There were porridge and herring-tails and outsides of cheeses. It was nice. Then Ravager stuck up his back-hairs most dretful, and said: "If I am for Proper Whackings, I will chop Mister-Kent." We went with to see.

There was plenty Peoples there, all Bell-Day black all over. We saw Moore. We saw Mister-Kent. He was bleedy one side his blacks. He blew. He said: "Ravager's made a proper hash of him. Look at me Sunday-best!" Moore said: "That shows he ain't swine-chopped to matter." Mister-Kent said: "Dam-all-how-it-shows!

What about my Bull?" Moore said: "Put him down to the Poultry Fund; for if ever Bull cried dung-hill, *he* did with Ravager." Mister-Kent said plenty-lots.

Ravager walked slow round barn and stopped stiff. His back hairs was like angry Gentlemen-pigs. Mister-Kent began to say dretful. Moore said: "Keep away. He has his mother's temper, and it's dash-awkward." Then Moore said nice small things and patted. Ravager put his head on Moore's feets, and all his back-hairs lay down and was proper coat again. Moore took him to kennel, and filled water-trough, and turned straw on sleeping-bench. Ravager curled up like small puppy, and kissed hands. Moore said: "Let him be till he sees fit to come out. Else there'll be more hurt than your Bull."

Slippers and me ran away. We was afraid. We were dretful dirty. My nice frilly drawers was full of sticky burrs, and our front-shirts were bleedy off Bull. So we went to our Adar, but Own Gods and Smallest and Nurse Thick came, and they all said and said and petted, except Cookey because Kitchen Cat is not come back. There was wonderful things-under-table at dinner. One was liver. One was cheese-straw and one was sardine. Afterwards, was coffee-sugar. We wented up to see Smallest bye-loed. He is quite well. We are *most* fine dogs. Own Gods keep saying so. It are fun!

Just after that Times. There is no more Ravager at

Walk. I have wented to see him. Moore came with Tall Horse and cracky-whip and took. Ravager showed very proud dog inside (he said), but outside frightened puppy. He said I were his true friend in spite of my little legs. He said he will come again when he is grown-into-a-Hound, and I will always be his True Small Friend. He went looking back, but Moore cracked whip. Ravager sung dretful. I heard him all down the lane after I could see. I am sorrowful dog, but I am always friend of my friend Ravager. Slippers came to meet me at Rabbit Holes. We got muddy on tum, because we have low clearances. So we went to our Adar for clean.

Kitchen Cat was on Wall again. Slippers said: "Give her cold-dead-rat." We wented-past-under quite still. She said: "I am Kitchen Cat come back, silly little pups!" We did not say or look. We went to Adar. Slippers said me: "Now we hunt Bulls in Parks, do not ever say to Kitchen Cat—*ever*!" I said: "Good rat! You *are* wise dog." Cookey picked up and said: "Mee own precious Pussums!" Kitchen Cat said: "I am Cat, not Dog, drat you!" Cookey kept on petting. Then she tied up by basket in kitchen, and said: "Now you've had your lesson about going up to the nursery, you'll stay with me in future and behave!" Kitchen Cat spitted. Cookey took broom in case we hunted; but we went past quite still. This is finish to Kitchen Cat. We are fine

dogs. We hunt Bulls. She does not hunt real rats. She is *Bad! Bad! Bad!*

XIV

LATE APRIL 1925

Most Wonderful Times. This is me—Boots. Three years old. I am 'sponsible dog (Slippers, too), Master says. We are 'sponsible for that Smallest. He can get out of push-kennel. He walks puppy-way between Slippers and me. He holds by ears and noses. When he sits down, he pulls up same way. He says: "Boo-boo!" That is me. He says: "See-see." That is Slippers. He has bitted both our tails to make his teeth grow strong, because he has no bone at night. *We* did not say. He has come into both our kennels, and tried to eat our biscuit. Nurse found. There was smallest Whack-whacks. *He* did not say. He is finest Smallest that is.

He had washings and new collar and extra brush. It was *not* Bell-Day. It was after last-run-of-season. He walked on lawn. We came, one each side. He held. There was horns in Park. I were tingly in all my hairs. But I did not say. ('Too old to make-fool-of-myself, *my* time of life, Master says.) There was Hounds and Pinks coming on grass. There was Moore—but he was Pinks. There was Mister-Kent. But he was like rat-catcher, Hunt Terrier said. There was nice Proper Man which was kind to Ravager in barn about being swine-

chopped. There was some more Pinks, but not friends. Moore took all Hounds to gate by lawn. They sat down quiet. They was beautiful muddy, and seeds in coats and tails, and ears bleedy. Hunt Terrier sat in own basket on Tall Horse. When Moore put him down he said dretful things to Hounds. They did not say back. Proper Man said to Master and Missus: "We have come to call with brush for that Smallest."

Smallest liked because it tickled; but Nurse Thick washed off with hanky quick. Master-an'-Missus said: "How did Ravager do?" Proper Man said: "As usual. 'Led from end to end. He wants to talk to you." Ravager stood up tall at the gate and put nose through. Smallest stretched out and Ravager kissed. Then Moore said: "Over, lad!" Ravager overed in one jump, and said to Smallest, two times most loud, like Bell-Day, and played puppy very careful, and let Smallest hold by ears. His ears are all made round now.

He spoke me. I went paws-up, because he were so big and dretful and strong. He said: "Drop it, Stoopid! 'Member me bein' lost? 'Member Bucket and Fish-heads? 'Member Bull? 'Member Cow-pups and Lady-pigs and Mister-Kent and Proper Whackings and all those things at Walk? You are True Sporting Dog, except only because of your little legs, and always true friend of Ravager." He rolled me over, and held down with paws, and play-bit in my neck. I play-bitted him too, right on jowels! *All* the Hounds saw! I walked round stiff-on-toes, *most* proud.

Then Hunt Terrier wiggled under gate without leave. Proper Man said to Missus: "He is pensioned now, but it would break his heart not to turn out with the rest. He can't hurt your dogs, poor fellow." Hunt Terrier walked-on-toes round me and showed black teeth. I went paws-up, because he were old and dretful about knowing Uncomfy things. He said: "I will let you off this time, Snipey, because you knew about Ravager sleep-hunting in Dark Covers. 'Dash narrow shave, that! Now I must go and look after the young entry. Not one-dash-Hound among 'em!"

He went away and bitted at an old Lady-Hound, lemon-and-white, with black bites on jowels. She said, and wrinkled nose dretful, but she did not chop. She sat and looked at Ravager through gate, and said to him—like Bell-Day, but more loud. Proper Man said:

"Old Regan wants her tea. 'Fraid we must be going." They wented away. There was horns and Horses and Pinks, and Hounds jumping up, and Moore saying names loud, and Ravager overed gate most beautiful. They wented all away—all—all. I were very small little dog.

Then Smallest said: "Boo-boo!" "See-see!" He took necks by collars. He said to Own Gods: "Look! Look! Own 'ounds! Own 'ounds! Tum on tea, 'ounds." . . .

Please, that is finish for now of all about me-and-Slippers. I make Beseech!

THE GREAT PLAY HUNT

THE GREAT PLAY HUNT

PLEASE! Door! Open Door! . . . This is me—Boots —which told you all those things about my true friend Ravager at Walk and Mister-Kent-Peoples and Kitchen Cat and Master-Missus and Smallest, when I was almost Pup. Now I am 'sponsible dog, rising eight. I know all about Peoples' talkings. No good saying r-a-t-s or w-a-l-k-s to me. *I* know! (Slippers too.)

Slippers is 'sponsible for Smallest, risen seven and a half, because Smallest belongs to Missus. And Slippers too. I help. It is very fine Smallest. It has sat on Tall Horse, which is called Magistrate, in front of that White Man which was kind to Ravager at Walk, which I told you, which is called Moore-Kennel-Huntsman. It has learned to keep hands down and bump, and fall off proper, and all those things. Now he has own pony called Taffy-was-a-Welshman. He rides with Moore and Magistrate all-over-Park. We come with. *And* he goes to Meet when it is at Kennels. Master-Missus say he must not real-hunt-just-yet. He does not like and says. I come to Meets with James in Kennel-that-Moves because of those dash new Hunt Terriers.

I speak to my friend Ravager from next to steering-wheel, where I sit. He is best-hound-ever-was, Moore says. He walks close to near fore-leg of Magistrate. It is *most* 'sponsible place. He has nigh-half-choked Upstart for trying to take it, Moore says.

Now I will tell things and things like rats running.

First, 'was dash-bad business about Smallest in Old Nursery before brekker. There was hard tight collar. That new Nursey, which is called Guvvy, pinched under neck. Smallest said about boney old Lady-Hound. Guvvy said-and-said and shook Smallest. We shook too—one each side her middle dress. We did *not* nip. It tore of herself. Missus came up quick. Guvvy said all-about-all again. We wented downstairs quick. Missus called to Master. He said: "Come here, you two sweeps!" There was Proper Whacking with own cutty-whip. But we did *not* nip that Guvvy. There was whack-whack for Smallest too. He was put in corner till 'I-am-sorry.' We went with to sit by, same as always with old Nursey. Missus said: "I will not have my son's education perverted by two 'sreputable curs." There was order not to be with Smallest all whole day. *And* nothing gived under-table at brekker. So we wented to dust-bin, which I can open with my nose. House not comfy because of Guvvy saying about us to our Adar. Our Adar said: "P'raps I ought to have warned you, but now you have had your lesson. Of

course, Slippers will never forgive you for touching Master Digby, and as for that Boots, he can bear malice for months!" After dust-bin I said Slippers: "Come for walk-about." He said: "Own-God-Master always wants you help him walk-about after brekker." I said: "I do not want Own God. I did *not* nip that Guvvy-Lady-Hound. Come with." Slippers said: "They have put soap on my Smallest's teeth for bad-wording. He is kennelled up in Old Nursery. I will stay at home. P'raps he will wave me out of window." So I took myself's to Walk, where Mister-Kent-Peoples is. I were nice to Mister-Kent's two Frilly Smalls, which I know since they came. There was bread and butter and sugar. There was: "Run along to school now, dearies." I wented with to take care. There was lots more Smalls going to school, which I all knew. I ran sticks for them. There was two pieces gingerbread and two sweeties. Then I wented back to Walk because I were hungry. There was two hen-heads outside ferret-kennel-box. They were nice. There was Lady-Hen in barn hatching eggs. They were good. There was Ben-sheep-dog, which was tied up because of meddy that morning. He had left his bone out too far. I took away to Micefield where Wood's Edge comes down behind Walk. I caught four mices by jumping-on through grass. There was some of very old rabbit lying about. But bad fur. So I unhad all which was inside me, and wented into Woods for drink in

Middle Ride. *And* sleeped. When I unsleeped, there was that old Fox which Ravager calls Tags, be cause he has very fine brush. He is dash-old but dash-wise, Ravager says. There was steel-trap on near-fore. He was biting-out foot. He said: "If I am found like this, it is finish-for-me." I said: "There is no

There was Ben-sheep-dog, which was tied up because of meddy that morning.

Meet to-day." He said: "Every day is Meet for that dash-Ben-cur-dog." I said: "Ben is tied up. He has took meddy." Tags said: "Then there is a chance." He bited his foot, same as me with thorns. He bited off two toes, and licked and licked. He said: " 'Serves me right for being dash-fool, my time-of-life." He said it were

two-nice-kind-ladies, long ways off, across railway line in Cotswold country (because Tags does *not* kill at home), which took hens to be killed in kennels-that-move, which had set trap under hen-house floor, with chicken which he could see. He tried to rake out. Trap caught two toes. He came home with—four miles—all through the night-times. He said he could not kill for himself for long whiles now, because of sore toes. I said: "There is a big bone and four mices in Micefield, and some of old rabbit." He said: "Good enough! Tell Ravager I am as lame as trees. I am two toes short. I will lie up for rest of season. Then I will go to my-home-among-the-rocks-in-Wales, if I can keep living alive."

I wented back to Walk, because I were hungry again. Ben said me lots about his bone. I said back. I danced. A Kent Frilly Small came and said: "There is Boots playing so pretty with Ben. May I take him home, in case he will lose himself?" I were very nice. But first was tea in Kent-kitchen with Frilly Smalls—bread and ham-juice. Then I took that Frilly back careful to own back-door. Adar said: "Lost? Him? Boots? *Never*, me dear!" Own Gods was at tea. But not Smallest. Slippers sat close by door making sorrowful sniffles which Own Gods do not like. (I helped.) Master said: "Dash-it-all, if the house is to be run by this black-guard Trades Union of ours, accept it. Have Digby down!" Smallest came down to tea. We was all-over-

him. There was tea-cake and two sugars and ginger-biscuits. Missus said: "Do you think Boots spent the whole day looking for Smallest?" Master said: "Not if I know Boots." Own Gods began talking Master-Missus way. We wented to help Smallest kennel-up.

I played smelling rats and looking rat-holes . . . and growled dretful.

I played smelling rats and looking rat-holes in Old Nursery. I ran about and growled dretful. Guvvy did not like because of her feet. But I did *not* ever nip that Guvvy—more than Tags ever killed at Walk. (Slippers too.) 'Was dash silly business for me afterwards—my life-o'-life. Guvvy told Missus about rat-holes. Missus told Master. Master told James to look and stop rat-

holes. James told Old Nursery was tight as bottles everywhere. Adar said me in scullery after: "Boots, you come along o' me." I wented up with. I were not comfy. Adar said: "Now you find those precious rat-holes of yours." I played looky-sniffy hard. But it were play rat-holes. I went paws-up. Adar said: "I thought so, you little devil!" She took by collar and rubbed nose hard in corner, same as if I were pup being taught House. I were very angry. I wented under bed. She pulled me out by tail. She said: "You black-hearted little villain! But I love yer for it!" *And* she kissed me same as Small Pup. I were dretful 'shamed. But I did not *ever* nip that Guvvy.

Now I tell new things. *Please* sit up!

I were dretful 'shamed.

There was plenty-rides always with Smallest and Moore in Park. Smallest wanted to real-hunt dretful bad, but Master-Missus said not-just-yet-awhile. Moore did not say except to James at Meet, when Smallest tried to quick-up that Taffy with safety-pin. Moore saw. He said James: "My money is on the young entry." I said Ravager all those things which Tags had told me about his sore toes. Ravager said: "Tell Tags I am dash-sorry for him. He has given me as much as I could do for five seasons, and he was not chickens then. I hope he will lie-at-earth till leaves-on, because business is business." Next whiles I was at Middle Ride I told Tags what Ravager had said. Tags said his toes was not so sore, and if it were early spring, he could keep living alive—somehow.

Time whiles after that, 'was Meet at Kennels. Master-Missus said Smallest could begin real-hunting at cubbing-times next September. Smallest was dretful good, and talked Master-Missus and Slippers how he would hunt, till bedtime. I told my friend Ravager all those things, when I speaked loud to him next Meet, before all the Hounds. He said: "I will show that Smallest a thing or two when he comes up. He is keen-stuff."

Time whiles after that, Shiny Plate got up strong, and made-sing. Adar looked out from high-up, and said: "Quiet!" We played Rattle-chain round our kennels. Adar said: "Drat!" She came and unloosed,

like she always does when we do enough. We went for walk-abouts in Gardens and Orchard like we always do when she does. It were fun. Then we heard 'Lost Hound' like long ways off, but not proper singing. We said: "Who is? Come here." It said: "I do not know where 'here' is. I do not see." I said: "That is Ravager. Rabbit it!" We rabbited through Orchard. There was Ravager. *But* he walked side-ways, head-twisty—very dretful. I said loud. He did not know. He said: "I will go quick to Kennels." But he went round and round. He said: "'Ware Kennel-that-Moves!" Slippers said: "It is strange new 'stemper-dog inside Ravager. 'Same what Cookey gave me egg-an-brandy-for." Ravager said: "Where is my own place on the Bench?" But he bumped trees and twisted. We were afraid. We came each one side him. We came to own kennels. . . . He fell down between. We licked his head because it were bleedy. After long whiles he said: "Where is this?" We said: "This is Boots and Slippers." He tried to go away to Kennels. He could not lift. We lay close and licked and licked till Adar pulled back kitchen-curtains for brekker. We said. She came quick. (Cookey too.) There was egg-an-brandy, as-fast-as-you-can. Master-Missus and Smallest came quick after. James went in Kennel-that-Moves to get Vet-Peoples out-of-bed-by-his-hair. Moore and Magistrate came quick too, because Ravager had not cast-up at Kennels last night, and

Upstart had fought Egoist for Ravager's place on sleepy-bench, and Kennels was all-of-a-nuproar. Moore said small to Ravager, but Ravager did not say back. Moore and Master put him on potting-bench in shed after Harry-with-Spade had broomed out and got small stove lighted. Smallest was took away to brekker, saying loud. Vet-Peoples did dretful things to Ravager's head. There was put-him-to-bed after. Moore set away straw same as at Kennels. Ravager tail-thumped two small times. We was let lie. We licked and we licked his head. Vet said he had lost one eye for always and not-much-chance for other. He said it was some-dash-motor. *And* Ravager were sick dog!

All those whiles, Smallest came to sit with, 'cept only when Guvvy took away, or it was rides in Park. Me too, except if Master wanted me help him walk-about farms. One time I saw Tags in Wood Edge. I told about Ravager. He said: "I knew it the same night. It were that kennel-that-moves of the nice-kind-ladies in the Cotswold country, which takes hens to be killed. Tell Ravager I am dash-sorry; because eyes are worse than legs. Tell him to come over some day when it is leaves-on, and we will talk old runs. We are both finished now; and no-bad-feelings." And he said: "Licking is best for cuts. Look at my toes!" And he said he was killing again off nice-kind-hen-killer-ladies, which was sending bill to the Cotswold *and* Heythrop.

One time I saw Tags in Wood Edge. I told about Ravager.

He said they was Prize Cockerels, but it were dash-difficult to get bellyful these hard late frosts. I said: "There is fine dust-bin at our place. I can lift lid with nose. We will not tell." Tags said me: "If your legs was good as your heart, I could not live for three fields in front of you. I am ashamed—'my-time-of-life—to go dust-binning. But I will come. Tell Ravager not to make a song about it, if he winds me." So he came to our dust-bin all quiet.

Whiles after that, Ravager was unsick Hound again. He said he had had thorn in foot at end of that run. He turned out on grass to bite it out, by gate of nice-kind-ladies where Tags killed chickens. Ladies was taking hens to be killed, lots-and-plenty, in kennel-that-moves. They skidded kennel on grass because they talked. They hit him into ditch, and he was made into strange blind dog. I told him about Tags and dust-bin. He said: "That is all proper. Tell him to come and talk me old runs together, because we are both out-of-it now."

Time whiles after that, Ravager got down off bench and ate grass. He said me: "I will go to my Kennels and speak them all there. Come with, because I do not see except my near side, and dash-little there." Slippers said: "It is riding-times for my Smallest. I will wait." So I wented with Ravager. I put me his off-side in case if he bumped. We wented slow up middle of Park, which he knew by nose. Kennels was shut. Moore and

Magistrate was coming to take Smallest for ride. Proper Man were there too, with new-four-year-old. I sat down outside, because I do not like those dash new Hunt Terriers. Ravager put up nose and said very long at Kennel Gates. There was dretful noise inside Kennels, all together, one time, and stop. Proper Man said Moore: "I did not think this would have to happen." Moore said: "I saw it once when I was stable-boy to the Marquis, me Lord." Proper Man said: "Let him in and get it over. 'Pity's sake!" Ravager was let go in. He went to window looking into Hounds' sleepy-bench. He lifted himself up slow on sill, and looked them with his near eye. He did not say. There was one time more dretful noise inside, together, and stop. Then he *did* say very long, same as Lost Hound. Then he looked in, and 'was one more dretful cry inside. He dropped down. He came out. I said: "What is?" He said: "Upstart has my place on bench. I will go riding with Smallest." Proper Man said Moore: "Come *on*!" But Magistrate's girths was slack. Moore tighted up very careful. Proper Man blew his nose angry and said: "You are as big dash-fool as your Master." We wented back to Smallest. Proper Man told Smallest Ravager would not ever come to Kennels any more, and gave him for very own to keep always. Master-Missus put in old Labrador Kennels by vegetable gardens, with day-and-night-bench, but never locked, so he could

come and go like-he-felt. (I can open that with my nose too.)

After that, 'was plenty ridings in Park, because Magistrate had thick-leg and wanted gentle-summer-exercise. Those times, Smallest said all about real-hunting, same as always. Moore said, if Ravager could speak, he could show Smallest more than Master-or-Me. He said all about real-hunts and Ravager, and Romeo and Regan, and Royal and Rachel, and Rupert and Ristori, which was all Ravager's fathers and mothers; and Foxes and Scents and casting hounds, and those fine things. Smallest found small red rumpet in Old Nursery, and played it were Horn-on-a-fine-hunting-morn. Moore showed how to squeak with. Ravager showed Slippers and me how to answer to Horn same as Sporting Pack. It were fun.

'Was one time when leaves-was-all-on, Shiny Plate came up strong and made-sing. We played Rattle-chain till Adar loosed, like she always does. We went to see Ravager, like we always do then. 'Was Tags outside old Labrador Kennels down-wind under gooseberries, like he does when he comes for talk. There was big say-and-say about old runs with Ravager and Tags. They did not say same about things. Slippers said: "No use worrying dead rats." Ravager said: "Better worrying dead rats than no rats ever." Slippers said: "I know a good rat. Make a new run by your two selves. Make

a run for my Smallest." Ravager said: "He will come up with the young entry for cubbing in September. He will learn soon enough then." Slippers said: "*But* show him a run now by yourselves; because you and Tags are dash-cunning at both ends of the game." Tags said: "That looks like sound Rabbit. Bolt him." Slippers said: "Make my Smallest a play-hunt up and down Wood Edge Rides. That Taffy is all grass-belly. He cannot jump, but he can wiggle through anywhere. Make a play-hunt up and down all the Wood Rides." I said: "*And* across Park, and plenty checks for me to keep with Ravager in case if he bumps." Ravager said: "I will not bump. I know every inch of the Park by nose. I will not bump." Tags said: "I am lame. I am fat. I am soon going to Brecknock." Ravager said: "You are too much dust-bin. 'Do you good to have a spin in the open before you leave. 'Do us both good." Tags said: "That is Shiny-Plate-talk." *But* he waggled his brush. Ravager said: "What about scent this time-of-year?" Slippers said: "Make it point-to-point, same as Hunt Races, and dash-all-scents." Ravager said: "But I must show our Smallest how proper hounds work. He must see a-little-bit-of-all-sorts." Tags said: "My toes tell me that when Shiny Plate sits down this morning, rain will come, and scent will lie." Ravager said: "You ought to know. Now, worry out run for Smallest." So there were proper worry—like all shaking same rat—

about line-of-country for Smallest's play-hunt. It were across Park from Wood's Edge Rides by Cattle Lodge and Little Water to Starling Wood, and saying good-bye to all kind friends at The Kennels, and finish at Made Earths by Stone Wall on County road, because, Tags said, that were his back-door to the Berkeley Country for Wales. Slippers and me helped lots. Then rain came, like Tags' toes said.

Morning-time 'was finished raining. Moore came with Magistrate—which had thick-leg and smelly bandage—only-for-gentle-work. Smallest took rumpet with, and own cracky whip, same as always. Ravager ran near-side Taffy. Me too. We wented up by Mice-fields to Middle Ride because of soft going, Moore said. In Middle Ride 'was Tags waiting like he said he

would. Moore said: "Dash his impertininces! Look at him!" Ravager gave tongue and wented up Ride. Me too. Smallest sticked hand behind ear and squealed proper. Tags scuttled limpity, but dash-quick. Magistrate see-sawed like that thing in Old Nursery. Moore

said: " 'Old 'ard, you silly summer-fool, you! Come back, Master Digby!" Smallest said: "Hike to Ravager! Forrard on!" We rabbited down Middle Ride—'normous long way. Tags turned right-handed into cover at Keeper's Oak, so he could slip into Park by Beech Hedge Gaps and Three Oaks, like he said he would. It were thick cover. We took it easy because it were hot. I keeped beside Ravager because he did not see. Tags said him in cover: "There is nothing wrong with your legs." Ravager said: " 'Sorry if I pressed! I

know Middle Ride by nose. That were not bad beginning." Moore said loud: "Come away, Master Digby. You won't see any more of him. He'll be through all manner of counties by now." Smallest said: "Don't you hunt my hounds!" Taffy pecked on ant-hill in fern. Smallest pitched forward, and hit face on Taffy's head. His nose bleeded plenty. He wiped with hand across. Moore said: "What *will* I say to your Ma?" Slippers said: "Ravager, draw down West Ride, where that Taffy can see his stoopid feet!" Ravager spoke, and drew down West Ride over turf all proper, to Beech Hedge Gaps into Park by Three Oaks. Taffy wiggled through. Magistrate after. *He* were like bullocks. Moore was all leafy. He badworded Magistrate. Tags came out from behind Three Oaks like he said he would, and wented down Little Water. Smallest rumpeted. Moore said: "He ain't ever going to cross the Park? Or *is* he? Dash if I make-it-out-at-all!" Tags went by Little Water to Park Dingle. He crossed Water two times, like he said he would, and went along from Park Dingle to Larch Copse.

Ravager took up scent and worked along Little Water quite slow, to show Smallest proper-good-work. Moore said: "Watch, Master Digby! You'll never see anything prettier in your life—young as you are!" It were dretful strong scent. Slippers and me spoke to it loud. Ravager too. When we came to Larch Copse,

where Tags had doubled, like he said he would, Ravager said: "Stop it, stoopids! We lose the Scent here." He threw up head, and went back to Taffy and Smallest, and sat down and scratched ear. (Slippers and me too.) Smallest said: "Shall I cast them?" Moore said: " 'Can't have it both ways, Master Digby. They're your 'ounds, not mine." Smallest put finger in mouth and bited, like he does when he does not know. Moore did not say. We did not say. After whiles (we did not say) Smallest rumpeted, and cast back other side Little Water to Park Dingle. Ravager said: "Our Smallest is no fool!" We all worked hard on back-cast. Slippers said: "May I give tongue now for my Smallest? Scent is strong enough to kill pigs." So he were let give tongue. (Me too.) Ravager confirmed. Tags got out of Park Dingle like he said he would. We all rabbited for Cattle Lodge in Park, where once fat Bull was which we hunted. It were sound turf which Ravager knew by nose. That were f'rocious Burst. I led. Slippers to Lodge. Tags got under yard-gate. Ravager said me: "May I fly cattle-bars? I think the top one is down." I said: "It is up. Go under!" He were dretful ashamed, but he did go under. We all sat in calf-shed, where water-trough is, and drinked. We were thirsty. After whiles, Moore said to Smallest outside: "What made you cast back at Larch Copse, Sir?" Smallest said: "If I were lame Fox pushed out of my Woods, I would

try to get back." Moore said: " 'Eaven be praised! You have it in you! I'ave only 'elped fetch it out!" Tags said Ravager: "It is time I left the country. Was anything wrong with my double? Did either you little 'uns give that cub of yours a lead about it?" Slippers said: "I *did* try to help my Smallest by edging

Slippers said: "May I give tongue now for my Smallest?"

off. But he was angry, and told me off proper. That back-cast were all his own rat." Then Tags said Ravager: "Why did you run so mute down Little Water? Young 'uns are always keen on music, you know." Ravager said: "Sorry! That was my Mother's fault, too, on a scent. She always preferred her work to her company. Same as me." Tags said: "Come on then. Next point is Starling Wood. I shall work down old Drainage

Ditch, taking it easy, and slip in by Duck's Hollow. It will be more little-bit-of-all-sorts for your Smallest."

Tags broke to view behind Cattle Lodge, like he said he would. There were scurry over turf to Old Ditch. He dropped in. It were deep—with brambles. We took it easy. Smallest said loud, because he could not see. Moore said: "They are working their hearts out for you in there, Master Digby. Don't press 'em. Don't press!" Ravager said Tags: "Show a bit, now and then. The Young Entry are all for blood, you know." So Tags showed up two-three-times edge of ditch. *And* Smallest squealed and was happy-pup. At Ditch-end Tags said: "Come through Duck's Hollow quiet, and 'ware new hurdles." So we did. Starling Wood was hurdled tight. Ravager took hurdles flying skew-ways, because he saw them a little. I were uncomfy of my friend Ravager. I did not know what he would fall on—same as me with lawn-mower and the pheasant-bird. But it were only thistles. He said: "Sorry! I forgot I were blind dog."

We all sat. It were stinky, eggy, feathery birdy place —all sticks. Ravager said Tags: "Moore never puts hounds in here. We do not like it, and Scent don't lie." Tags said: "But Moore does, and Foxes cannot be dash-particular." Moore and Smallest came riding outside. We sat still. Moore said: "He *can't* be there, Master Digby! No fox uses where starlings use. The Hounds

won't look at Starling Copse." Smallest said: "You said hunting is what-can't-happen happenin' dash-always." Moore said: "Yes, but he's gone on to make his point across the Park. Come 'ome and wash your face 'fore anyone sees." Smallest said: "And lose my Fox?" Moore said: "Then get 'old of 'em and cast forward." Smallest did not say. He took rumpet off his saddle and held out to Moore. Moore would not take. He wented over all red in his face. He said: "I most 'umbly apologise, Master Digby. I do indeed." Slippers said: "I do not know this rat." Ravager said: "He is giving his horn to Moore, because Moore knows so dash-well how to find his fox." Tags said Ravager: "'Better speak a little, or Moore will lose me—same as last season." Ravager speaked. Smallest said: "He *is* there! Ravager can't lie. You said so yourself. Get down-wind quick!" Moore wented. He hit Magistrate proper. Slippers said: "Why did Moore not take my Smallest's rumpet?" Ravager said: "Moore is too dash-ashamed of himself for trying to hunt another man's hounds—same as that snipey-nose-man which The Master gave his horn to, because he said he was whip to the Bathsheba Lady-Pack." Tags said Slippers: "Come with! Here is another bit-of-all-sorts for your Smallest." They wented where wood was stinkiest. Big cub ran out under hurdles at Smallest. Slippers after. Smallest did not like. He said: "Fresh fox! 'Ware cub! Hike back to

Ravager, you dash-lap-dog!" And cut at Slippers with cracky-whip. *And* hit. Slippers came back quick. He said Tags had said him to-push-out-that-youngster-and-see-how-Smallest-took-it. Moore came round cover. Smallest said: "I have badworded Slippers. I have cut at my own Slippers!" Moore said: "Don't take that to heart! You can badword everyone at coverside 'cept your own Pa-an-Ma and The-Master-an-Me." Tags said: "I think I will start for Fan Dringarth to-night. This is going to be dash-poor country for cripples next season." Ravager said: "Have a heart! Stay and keep me company." Tags said: "I would, but I have only one brush. Now, next point is Made Earths at Stone Wall on County road, where I go under for Dean Forest. Ravager said: "Made Earths is tight as drain-pipes. You cannot get-away-out-of till dark." Tags said: "Drain-pipes heave in frost. Then Badgers work 'em. But first we say farewell to all kind friends at The Kennels. There will be check at New Firs. You little 'uns drop out there, and take it easy up to Fir Knoll, till we come back from Long Dip. Then join in for rattling finish."

Slippers said: "That Taffy cannot gallop to keep himself warm." Ravager said: "*But* Magistrate wants three-new-legs. We will take care of them. Now play proper Pack. Get away together!"

Tags broke under Taffy's nose. 'Was most beauti-

ful cry, and Adar could have covered with sheets. After that I were not so quick as Ravager. It were falling ground and sound turf, which Ravager knew by nose. 'Was nice check at New Firs, like Tags said. Slippers and me dropped out. Presently whiles, Tags broke to view down Long Dip. Ravager on his brush. It were real business. Slippers and me wented to Fir Knoll and watched. Taffy and Smallest was littler and littler in Long Dip. Moore and Magistrate too. Tags and Ravager was littlest, far-est ways off, by Summer Kennels Yard. We heard Ravager speak most beautiful outside there. 'Was dretful common noises in Summer Kennels—like common dogs which cannot hunt when they want. I were happy-dog, because I do not like Upstart and Egoist. Nor new Hunt Terriers. (Slippers too.) We danced and singed.

Presently after whiles, Tags came up from Long Dip to Fir Knoll, dragging brush very limpity. He said: "I am Sinking Fox! Ravager is Lost Hound! Taffy is cooked! Magistrate is fit-to-boil! Come along, little 'uns, and Devil-take-short-legs!" We rabbited. That were t'riffic Burst. I headed Ravager for little whiles. We came to Made Earths screaming for blood. Tags got to ground in front of Ravager's front-teeth which was like rat-traps. We all wented singing down into the dark. We sat, tongues-out. Ravager said: "Top-hole finish!" Tags said: "Not bad, our-time-of-life. That

last point was quite a mile." Ravager said: "I make the run four mile from start to finish. You are too good for those Welshmen. Keep with us." Tags said: "Not with that youngster coming on. *But* he is Sportsman. Hark to him!" 'Was Smallest outside and Taffy blowing. Smallest said loud: "He were lame! Don't let them get him! He are lame! Call 'em off, Moore, an' we'll look for that dash-cub." And he rumpeted plenty. Moore said: "We 'ave done enough for one July day, Master Digby. 'Ere's 'is Lordship coming, and I'll never 'ear the last of it." Tags said Ravager: "I think you will be wanted for hunting out of season. I am going to Wales. You are true Sporting Lot." And Tags backed into Made Earths, which are his road to his home-among-the-rocks, where drain-tiles was heaved up and Badgers helped, like he said he would, till we could not see his eye-shine any more. Ravager called after: "You are best of them all, Tags!" But Tags did not say back.

We wented outside. There was Proper Man on Tall Horse coming slow from Kennels. Ravager said: "He is not our Master now. Play proper Pack." We lay down round Taffy, which was shaking tail, and girths-loosed, and Smallest making-much-of. Ravager did head-on-paws, and looked Smallest. I did thorn-in-foot. Slippers did burrs-in-tail. Moore did feeling Magistrate's thick-leg, and brush-

ing leaves out of his front. Proper Man came up slow. He took off cap to Smallest. He said: "Bowfront Hunt, I presume. 'Trust your Grace is satisfied with am-nities of my country." Smallest said: " 'Gone to ground. But it were spiffing run. I hunted own hounds. Listen, Uncle!" And he said and he said, like he can, about things, from find-to-finish. Proper Man said Moore: "When you have quite done bot'nizing all over your belly, p'raps you will let me know." Moore said: "My fault, me Lord. All my fault. I 'aven't a shadow of an excuse. I was whip to one lame fox, one blind 'ound, two lap-dogs, and a baby! And it was the run of me life. A bit-of-all-sorts, as you might say, me Lord, laid out as if it was meant to show Master Digby *multum-in-parvo*, so to speak. And may I never 'unt again, me Lord, if it 'asn't made 'im!" Proper Man said: "Let's have every last yard of it." Moore said and said. Smallest said and said, all one piece mixed. Proper Man asked about Tags' double, and Smallest's back-cast, and Scent and Starling Wood, and all those things, lots-and-plenty. He said it were babes-and-sucklings. We did not say. We tail-thumped when names was said, but no dash-parlour-tricks. We was proper Pack.

'Middle of say-so, Kennel-that-Moves came down County road with Missus, which had been shoppings. She stopped and overed wall in one. She came quick. She said: "Digby! *Look* at your face!" Smallest said:

"Oh, I forgot, Taffy pecked and pitched me forward." She said: "In you get with me, and have it washed off." Smallest said: "Oh, Uncle!" Proper Man said: "Let him take his hounds home, Polly. He has earned it." Missus said: "Then I will take Boots and Slippers. *They* don't hunt." But we would not. She said. James said. Smallest did not say. *So* we would not go in Kennel-that-Moves. We wented all across Park with Ravager and Smallest and Taffy and Moore and Magistrate and Proper Man to Own Kennels—like proper Pack.

We wented all across Park with Ravager . . . like proper Pack.

TOBY DOG

TOBY DOG

PLEASE, this is only me-by-selfs. This is Boots which were friend of Ravager. I make Beseech . . . I tell. But I do not understand.

'Was time when Smallest went to Flat-in-Town for things-in-throat, which Vet-People cut out so he could sleep shut-mouth, and not ever catch cold. He said he would be dretful-good if we came after. So we wented with our Adar in dog-box-in-train. Guard People said we was Perfect Gentlemen.

Flat-in-Town were stinky. Smallest were sick-abed. Times after, he lay on couch-by-window-at-back which looks into garage-place. We sat in window because of cats.

One time 'was whistle-squeaky noises, and Frilly Box, with legs under, came into garage-place. 'Was dog, like me and Slippers, with frilly collar. Plenty Smalls followed-tail. We told Smallest. He came to window in one. He said: "Hooray! Punch-and-Judy!" Dirty Man, which was legs, came out from under Frill Box, and whistle-squeaked with things in front of teeth. Frill-dog walked with behind-legs and shaked hands with

Smalls like Dirty Man told. Dirty Man went into Frill Box. Dollies came up on little sleepy-bench in front. One were all nose and bendy-back like which Smallest took off a Shiny-tree when he were pup. That Frill Dog came up on bench and bit Nose-Doll on nose. 'Was Scrap! Blue Dollie came. 'Was plenty Scraps! Nose-Doll put string round Blue Dollie and threw out over sleepy-bench and singed loud. 'Was finish. Dirty Man came out from under box, and showed his inside-hat to Smalls. They wented all away. He said: "Garn! You spend fortuns on the movies, you do, but when it comes-to-drammer, you run-like-ares." He whistle-squeaked and picked up Box and wented.

Time whiles after that, he came again. Smallest said James, which was up-with-the-washing: "Take them down to see near-to." We wented on-lead, and sat in front-row. Frill Dog, which was called Toby Dog, did all those dash-parlour-tricks for Smalls again. We was ashamed, because he were same-like-us. We said. Toby Dog said back: "If I weren't on-me-job, I'd give you something to sing for." . . . James took away quick. Toby Dog said: "Night-night! Don't choke yourselves, lovies!"

Time whiles more, Dirty Man came again. Smallest could not go down because of throat. James went and talked him plenty. Man said it were high-class-show-for-crowned-edds, but he would wash-hisself-first.

"That dash Toby Dog."

James told Missus. *So*, Dirty Man came up to Flat, and 'was high-class-show for Smallest and all-us and our Adar. But Toby Dog were slow and sorrowful. Dirty Man said Missus, it were like-master-like-man, because Toby Dog wore-hisself-out-giving-too-much-for-money, and he wanted rest-and-good-kind-home. That whiles, Toby Dog lay on back and rolled eyes like sick-pup. Adar said: "If those three get together, they will fight till dawn-o-day! Look at Slippers's face!" Missus said did-not-know-quite-what-Master-will-say. James said he could keep in garage at home, so he could-not-come-into-contracts with anyone. *So*, 'was done, and Toby Dog was took down with James to be made well-dog. Three-four day-times after, we wented down in dog-box-train. Nice Guard-People said Adar we was fit-for-show-as-we-stood.

When we was home, we rabbited round borders for bones, which we had hid—in case of hungries. They was took—all! Slippers said: "It are that dash-Toby-Dog! C'm with, and house-train him!" We winded him in Wall Garden. We said loud. He did not say. He made his eyes ringy-white round edges. He putted his head under his front. He lifted up behind. He rolled behind-ends-over-heads. He rolled at us! First 'was whitey-eyes: then back-ends rolling at! We had never seen like *that*. It were vile undogful! But we did not run. When he rolled quite close, we went

back. When he made singings like sick dog, we went back more quick to Own Gods on lawn. Master said me: "Hullo, Boots! You look as if something had ruffled your self-esteem. What's the fuss?" I did not say. I helped him smoke-pipe like I always do. Harry-with-Spade came and said 'was rabbit in vegetable-gardens. Master got two-bang-gun and went. We heeled quick. Toby Dog came out of garage, full-of-his-dash-self. He said: "What is?" Slippers said: "Come and see." Slippers went into cabbages, and bolted rabbit, which are his 'complishment. Master fired over me and killed. Toby Dog went away like-smoke. Master sent me to back-door with rabbit to give our Adar, which are one of my 'complishments. We went-find Toby Dog. He were on tum in boot-

"He rolled at us!"

box where James keeps shiney-feet-things. He said: "What was? What was?" We said: "Two-bang business." He said: "I cannot do! I am afraid! I can *not* do!" Slippers said: "You are one dash common-coward-thief-skug-dog! Where are bones?" Toby Dog told. We digged up and took which was left to old Labrador Kennel for safeness. We told Ravager. He were pleased of seeing us back. Toby Dog came round corner. He said: "I may be skug-dog, but I am not fool. Let me in on your game, and I will let you in on mine." Ravager said: "What are your dirty game?" He said: "Rats." *And* he said he

"Toby Dog went away like-smoke."

held rat-records at three pubz. We said: "What are pubz?" He said: "Lummy! You make me ache!" And he said pubz were where E went after is job. Slippers said: "What are E?" Toby Dog said: "Im, which is Own God." I said: "What are job?" He said: "What gets you your grub." I said: "That are our Adar when bell goes for Own Gods' Middle-eat, which are Lunch." He said: "You know fat lots, you do!" Ravager said: "No scrappin'! Real-rat to Toby Dog. Job is same as business. After business is trough and sleepy-bench everywhere." Slippers said: "His business is dash-parlour-tricks." And he said about Dirty Man and high-class-show. But he did not say about *that* in Wall Garden, which we had seen, because we was ashamed. Ravager said: "Do parlour-tricks!" Toby Dog walked with behind-legs long whiles. He said there was not-six-dogs-in-the-perfession like him. He said about rat-records which he held, which E, which were Own God, made betz-on. And he said how James had taken him over to Walk when he came down, and Mr. Kent-Peoples brought plenty-rats to try-out. *And* he killed eight in half a minute on barn-floor. He said James and Mister-Kent was dretful pleased, and was going-to-skin-the-village-alive as soon as odds-was-right. We did not understand.

Slippers said: "If you are all this dash-fine-dog, why did Im push you off on James and Missus?" Toby Dog

said: "It is end of London-season for Im. E don't need me awhile. So I play sick-dog and E sells me to nice-kind-people for good-ome. Presently, E will come along and make whistle-squeak. I will hear and go back to me-job. P'raps it will be Frill Box and Dollies. P'raps it will be leading blind-man across Marble Arch." Ravager said: "Is E blind?" Toby Dog said: "Blind-enough to get pennies-in-my-cup." Ravager said: "I am as near blind-as-makes-no-odds. I am sorry of E." I told how Ravager had been blinded by nice-kind-hen-killer-ladies. Toby Dog said: "If I had been along 'twould not have happened." I were dretful angry. Ravager said: "Drop it, Stoopid! Go and eat grass."

So 'was walk-about in back-gardens. Presently whiles, James brought cage of rats. And tipped out. I killed one. Slippers one. Toby Dog killed four which ran all different ways. James made-much-of, and said they would peel-the-breeches-off-the-village. Toby Dog were full-of-hisself. Slippers said: "Ware two-bang-gun! Rabbit it, tripe-hound!" 'Was big say-and-say. Ravager came up from kennel. He said: "What is silly-row *now*?" We told. Ravager sat and said: "*I* do not like two-bang-guns, and my mother Regan did not. Toby Dog is *not* tripe-hound. He cannot help himself. It's same as you with swimming." I said: "We have long hairs and low-clearance, James says. Of course we do not like water." Ravager said: "'Same with Toby Dog."

He told us off plenty for rudenesses, and went for sleep-in-fern near The Kennels in Park. Toby Dog said after: "That is one proper-sort! That is real-true-dog-gent which I will not ever forget!"

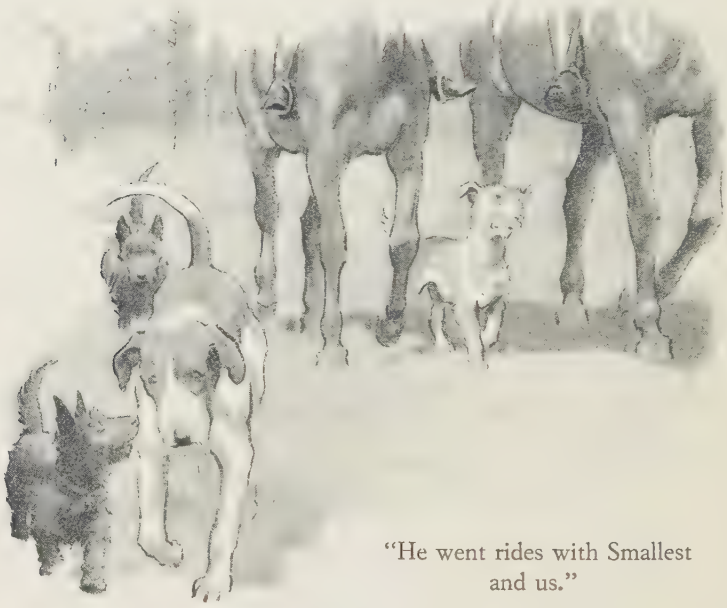
'Was bell from house, which our Adar rings for us to help Smallest ride with Moore and Taffy. We rabbited. Toby Dog said: "I come with."

It were first ride after Flat-in-Town. 'Was bit-of-a-circus with Taffy because, Moore said, that bone-idle-stable-boy had not exercised enough. But Smallest's legs was grown, and Taffy got-no-change. Smallest were a bit full-of-hisself. Moore said back: "Don't be too proud, Master Digby! Seats-and-hands is Heaven's gifts." Smallest were dretful 'shamed, because he *is* Champion Reserve Smallest. Moore said: "Not but what you've good-right-to." Ravager picked all us up in fern near The Kennels. Moore said: "Ravager has been ailing ever since that motor hit him. I don't like it." Ravager whimpered-to-name. Smallest said: "Hush! He knows." Moore said: "There's not much he don't know." And he said Ravager had took to lying-out-in-the-fern after Smallest went to Flat, so he could hear Hounds sing on Benches at morning-times for old-sake's-sake. Smallest said: "Has Uncle Billy found out yet about Upstart?" Moore said: "I told you too-much-for-your-age after our Lame Fox run. I 'ope you don't carry tales betwixt me and 'is Lordship." Smallest said:

"Catch *me*! But I cannot ever be proper Master Foxhounds 'less you tell me all what you know?" Moore redded over front-of-face. He said: "Thank you, Master Digby. When your time comes you'll 'ave to deal with such as Upstart. He has the looks-of-a-Nangel and the guts-of-a-mongrel." And Moore said Rosemary did Upstart's work for him, which was great-granddaughter of Regan, and ran near-as-mute-as-the-old-lady. And he had watched Upstart at fault time and again, and Rosemary whimpering-in-his-ear to tip-him-the-office, and he taking-all-the-credit. And if, for-any-reason, she was not out, his second-string was Loiterer, which was a soft tail-hound, *but* with wonderful-tender-nose. And he had watched Upstart at a check play thorn-in-foot till Loiterer came up and put-him-wise. But he said, 'is Lordship was set on Upstart going to Peterborough, which are where Hounds go for Champion Reserves, and the pity was his looks-and-manners-made-it-a-cert. He said Upstart was born imposter, same as Bandmaster his sire, which-should-never-'ave-been, but 'is Lordship was misled by his looks, and would *not*-listen-to-advice. And he said Modesty-his-Ma were a real-narsty-one on her-side-of-things. He said plenty-more-lots which I forgot. After pull-up, he said: "Now, Master Digby, you have known the Hounds since you fell into the meal-bin in your petticoats. What do *you* think?" Smallest said: "I could hunt any country in all the

"Rosemary did Upstart's work for him."

world with you and three couple which I were let choose. *And*, if Ravager were well-dog, I would make Uncle Billy present of the odd-couple." Moore redded all fresh over face. He said: "Lord love you! I shall be pushing-up-the-daisies long before that! But you 'ave



"He went rides with Smallest and us."

it in you. You 'ave all three in you—Hound, Fox and Horse! But, to get those three couple four-days-a-week, we have to put up with trash-like-Upstart."

After whiles, 'was gallop. Slippers and Ravager went with. Toby Dog said me, sitting: "That were rummy rat that man showed about that dash-clever dog. Tell

again." So I told about Upstart which I do not like, and how he got Musketeer help him fight Egotist for Ravager's place on sleepy-bench that night which Ravager did not cast up. And choked Musketeer after. And were glutton at the break-up-and-eat, which are not proper-game for lead-hounds, Ravager says, and did never go-in-for. Toby Dog said: "It is cruel-ard on perfessional dog to be knocked out of his job for no fault of hisn, like that real-old-dog-gent of yours." I said: "You are not half-bad-dog." He said: "I am perfessional. I do not tell all I can do, *but* I will put you up to proper rattings." So we wented to Walk and ricked round ricks. He showed how to chop rats—one-chop-one-rat, and not ever to shake, because it loses-time-on-the-count, he said. He told about rat-match at pub-in-village, where he were backed against Fuss, Third Hunt Terrier, which he said were pretty lady-dog which he could give ten rats in the minute and scratch-hisself-at-same-time.

Then we wented back to Labrador Kennel. Ravager was home and told us off proper for shirking-gallop. Slippers came too, because Smallest were at lesson. He said me he were pleased of Toby Dog not keeping with Smallest, because he did not want Smallest to care for. I said: "That Toby Dog does not want Smallest. He is dash-clever dog which does not do more *ever* than kill his rat. Leave alone!"

So 'was done. Toby Dog keeped with James about rats 'cept when he went rides with Smallest and us. One time Moore made that bone-idle-stable-boy lay drag to teach Taffy jumps and ditches for cubbing-times. It were dust-bin-herring-tails which I knew. Ravager said drags was stink-pot-stuff and wented home. (Me with.) So Toby Dog led. Time after that time, Smallest took him on lawn and said: "Do tricks!" Toby Dog sat and scratched ears. Smallest smacked head and said: "You are imposter like Upstart!" Toby Dog said us after: "Catch me working overtime for anyone 'cept 'Im and your real-true-dog-gent!" He speaked plenty to Ravager about hunting and hounds and all those things because he said he were perfessional and wanted to know about Ravager's perfession. Ravager liked, and told plenty back. And Toby Dog showed me real rattings and the watch-two-while-you-kill-one game. I sat out in fern with Ravager, which were my true friend since we was almost pups. And Smallest made Taffy jump-like-fleas, Moore said. *So* we was all happy dogs, that times.

Then 'was rat-match in village. Toby Dog said it were a cert, but he would give Fuss a look-in for looks' sake. That were night before Bell Day, and strong Shiny Plate. Slippers and me did walk-abouts in gardens waiting-for-result. (We are not tied up ever now since that man came over garden-wall to see about the broccoli and were nipped on behinds going-back-over.)

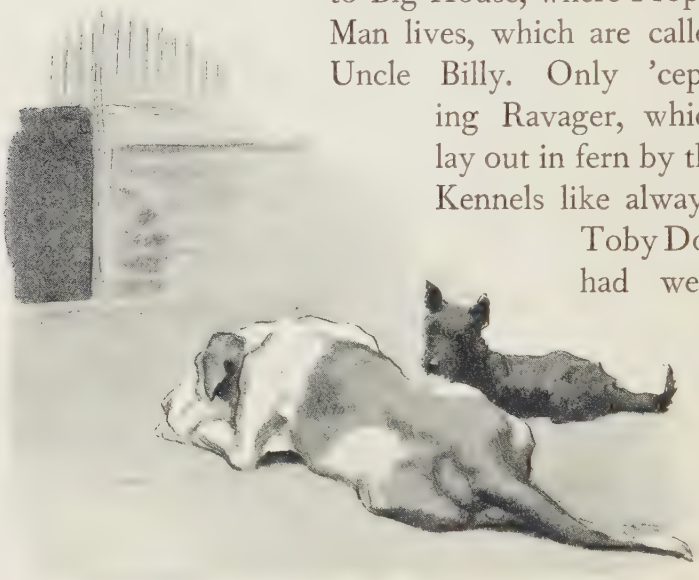
Toby Dog came home after match, which he had winned by what-you-dash-like. He said he had winded Dirty Man outside Spotted-Hound-pub in village. We said: "What rat do you run now?" He said: "E will need all

Fuss Third Hunt Terrier.

day to sleep-it-off. E will come to-morrow night. I am glad, because E is Own God. *But* I am sorry, because you two and your true-old-gent-dog have done me well, and I ad-oped to pay all 'fore I sloped. But E is Own God. When E comes, I go with." We said:

"Sorry too." We all went walk-abouts ('was hedge-hogs) and sat.

Next day-time was Bell Day and no-silly-week-end-visitors, Smallest said. We wented all for Middle Eats to Big House, where Proper Man lives, which are called Uncle Billy. Only 'cepting Ravager, which lay out in fern by the Kennels like always. Toby Dog had went



"I am no Hound any more."

to help James collect-debtz-out-of-that-dash-swindling-stable-boy about rat-match. So we did not see.

At Middle Eats was Master-Missus and Smallest and Proper Man and Proper Missus and my friend Butler, which I like, and a new Peoples which was called Jem, which was Master of some Hounds from some-place-

else. 'Was plenty Own Gods' say-and-say about hounds-and-feet and those things. Smallest did not say, like he does not ever about Hounds. ('Cept to Moore.)

After coffee-sugar, my friend Butler asked me into laundry-yard to help about rat-in-ivy. I chopped. ('Was cheese.) Butler made carrot-basket for all-Peoples to give Tall Horses. *So*, 'was walk-to-Kennels, which is always Bell-Day-rat after Middle Eats. I picked up Ravager in fern. He said: "Run along with. I never go. I am no Hound any more." I wented into yard with all-Peoples.

'Was Moore which called out Hounds by ones to stand for biscuit. 'Was plenty more say-and-say about legs-and-feet. Smallest did not say, but all hounds speaked him small and soft on flags. That Master Jem said: "Why, Diggy-boy, they seem to know you as well as Moore!" Smallest said back: "How vewy odd!" because he does not like old Nursey-Thick-names casting-up. (Same as me when my Adar says 'Bootles'.) Missus said small: "Digby! Behave!" Moore called out Upstart quick, and so'was loud say-and-say about looks and manners and Belvoir-tans. (*We* played fleas-on-tum.)

Then Proper Missus put hand-before-front-teeth. *So*, all-Peoples went to see Tall Horses, 'cept Smallest and Moore. Then Toby Dog came round corner from Tall Horse Kennels, all small and dusty-looking. He said us,

out of side-mouth: "Lummy, what a swine! If he don't scare, I'm a goner. Head my rat!" He made his eyes ringy-white all round, like in Wall Garden. He putted down his head under, and hunched up all his behinds, and rolled himself that undogful way which we had seen. *But* worse! It were horrabel! Upstart uphackled.

"Upstart bolted out of yard."

But we headed Toby Dog's rat. We singed: "What is? Oh, we are afraid!" Toby Dog made screamy-draggly noise like cat-pups. And rolled *at*! Upstart bolted out of yard same as pup-for-cutty-whip, and bolted into fern where Ravager were. We heard plenty yowl-and-kai-yai. Toby Dog unringed his eyes, and was little cheap skug-dog, which walked away. All-Peoples at Horse Kennels came back and said loud about what-

on-earth-was-the-matter-of-Upstart. Moore said seemingly-he-had-took-offence-at-the-terriers'-doings, and went-off-like-fireworks. That Master Jem said it were dretful-catching-fits, which play-deuce-and-all-with-Packs. Proper Man were angry. Smallest said: "Won't he be all right for Peterborough, Uncle Billy?" Proper Man said: "Dash Peterborough! Dash jackal! Never trust Bandmaster-blood, Moore! I warned you at the time." Soon whiles, Upstart came back singing snuff-and-butter, Moore said. Moore did not like, and turned him into Kennels which did not like, because he were beaten-hound and telling-it. 'Was big Bench-scrap! Moore went in and rated proper. Smallest looked through window, where Ravager had looked when he came blinded. He said: "Hooray! Musketeer has took Upstart's place and Upstart has Loiterer's—*right* at edge by door!"

Soon whiles, all-Peoples went back to tea saying say-and-say about fits. Smallest walked behind with Slippers and me. Time whiles he danced. We helped. We picked up Ravager in fern. I said: "We heard. Did you get?" Ravager said: "I could not help. He fell over me like a blind dog. I got him across the loins and wrenched him on his back. But he was in a hurry. What began it?" I told all what Toby Dog had done to Upstart. Ravager said: "That is a dash-odd-little-dog, but I like him. He hunts with his head. What was the Bench-

row about afterwards?" I told how Upstart had lost bench-place to Musketeer and had been gived Loiterer's. Ravager said: "Good rat to Toby Dog! That place was colder than Cotswold when I was a young 'un. Now I am happy!" We wented all in, and plenty things under tea-table. Ravager did not take. He sat by Proper Man, head-on-knee. Proper Man said: "What's brought you back to your old 'legiance, old fellow? You belong to Digby now." Ravager said soft and kissed hand. Proper Man said: "'Queer as his Mother before him!" After lots more say-and-say we all wented home 'cross Park. Smallest danced and singed loud till kennel-up. We went upstairs to help, like always when Guvvy lets. Ravager came with. That dash-Guvvy said him rudenesses on the stairs. Adar said her: "Beg pardon, Miss, but no one ever questions the old gentleman's comings-and-goings in *this* house." Ravager tail-thumped and kissed Smallest's two hands at pyjarm-time. He went down stairs slow, because he never-comes-up-to-the-top-landing. He said me: "Now I am all-round-happy-hound. Come see me later, Stoopid. I've something to tell you." I helped Master-Missus spend-happy-evening, like I do, till Adar came to take out and give night-bones.

After, I went for walk-abouts with Slippers, because Shiny Plate were shiny-strong. James came and called Toby Dog, which he could not find. *And* dashed

and wented. Toby Dog came out behind rhubarb-pots. He asked about Upstart. We told. He were happy dog. He said he had near-given-Alsatians-fits-that-way. He asked if old true-gent-dog Ravager were pleased of his

Toby Dog said: "That's Im. S'long!"

doings. He said he could not go-see him, because he were on-dooty expecting Im which was Own God any minute now. *And* he said he were plenty skug-cur about that two-bang business which were not perfessional. We said he were wonderful brave dog about Upstart, which me and Slippers would not have taken

on. He said: "Fairy Ann! Fairy Ann!" *But* he were most-happy dog. Presently whiles 'was whistle-squeak down lane by Orchard. Toby Dog said: "That's Im. S'long!" He wented all little through hedge. Dirty Man said outside: "Oh! You've come, 'ave yer? Come orn!"

Please, that is finish all about Toby Dog, which Ravager liked. (Me too.)

Slippers went-to-bone. I wented Labrador Kennel to speak Ravager, and opied door with my nose like I can.

Ravager said: "Who is?" I said: "Boots." He said: "I know that, but Who Else came in with?" I said: "Only Boots." He said: "There *is* Someone-else-more! Look!" I said: "Toby Dog has gone back to Im. Slippers has kennelled-up. It is only me-by-selfs. But I am looking." 'Was only Ravager and me everywhere. Ravager said: Sorry! I am getting blinder every day. Come and sit close, Stoopid." I jumped on sleepy-bench, like always, night-times. He said: "Sit closer. I am cold. Curl in between paws, so I can lay head-on-back." So 'was.

Presently whiles he said: "If this black frost holds, good-bye hunting." I said: "It is warm leaves-on night, with Shiny Plate and rabbits-in-grass." He said: "I'll take your word for it," and put head on my back, long whiles all still. Then he said: "I know now what it was I meant to tell you, Stoopid. Never wrench a

hound as heavy as yourself at my time of life. It plays the dickens with your head and neck." *And* he hickied. I said: "Sick-up, and be comfy." He said: "It is not tum-hickey. It is in throat and neck. Lie a bit closer." He dropped head and sleeped. Me too. Presently whiles, he said: "Give me my place on the Bench or I'll have the throat out of you!" I said: "Here is all own bench and all own place." He said: "Sorry! I were with the old lot." Then he dropped head-on-me and sleep-hunted with hounds which he knew when he came up from Walk. I heard and I were afraid. I hunched-up-back to wake him. He said, all small, "Don't go away! I am old blind hound! I am afraid! I am afraid of kennel-that-moves! I cannot see where here is!" I said: "Here is Boots." He said: "Sorry! You are always true friend of Ravager. Keep close, in case if I bump." He sleeped more, and Shiny Plate went on across over. Then he said: "I can see! 'Member Bucket on my head? 'Member Cow-pups we was whacked for chasing-pounds-off? 'Member Bull-in-Park? I can see all those things, Stoopid. I *am* happy-hound! Sorry if I were a noosance!"

So he sleeped long whiles. Me too, next to chest between paws. When I unsleeped, Shiny Plate was going-to-ground, and hen-gents was saying at Walk, and fern-in-Park was all shiny. Ravager unsleeped slow. He yawned. He said, small: "Here is one happy hound,

"I called."

with 'nother happy day ahead!" He shaked himself and sat up. He said loud: "It is morning! Sing, all you Sons of Benches! Sing!" Then he fell down all-one-piece, and did not say. I lay still because I were afraid, because he did not say any more. Presently whiles, Slippers came quiet. He said: "I have winded Something which makes me afraid. What is?" I said: "It is Ravager which does not say any more. I am afraid, too." He said: "I are sorry, but Ravager is big strong dog. He will be all right soon." He wented away and sat under Smallest's window, in case of Smallest singing-out at getting-up-time, like he always does. I waited till my Adar opened kitchen-curtains for brekker. I called. She came quick. She said: "Oh, my Bootles! Me poor little Bootles!" Ravager did not say her anything. She wented away to tell. I sat with, in case if he might unsleep. Soonwhiles, all-Peoples came—Smallest, Master-Missus, and Harry-with-Spade. Slippers too, which stayed by his Smallest and kissed hands to make him happy-pup. They took up to Orchard. Harry digged and put under like bone. *But* it were my Ravager. Smallest said dretful loud, and they wented away—all—all—'cept my Adar which sat on wheel-barrow and hickied. I tried to undig. She picked up, and carried to kitchen, and held me tight with apron over heads and hickied loud. They would not let me undig more. There was tie-up. After that whiles, I went for walk-abouts, in case if p'raps I could find

I am very little small mis'able dog. . . . I do not understand.

him. I wented to his lie-down in fern. I wented to Walk and Wood Ride and Micefield, and all those old places which was. He were not there. So I came back and waited in Orchard, where he cast up blinded that night, which were my true friend Ravager, which were always good to me since we was almost pups, and never minded of my short legs or because I were stoopid. *But* he did not come. . . .

Please, this is finish for always about Ravager and me and all those times.

Please, I am very little small mis'able dog! . . I do not understand! . . . I do not understand!

THE END

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